GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2515
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2016
Conservation of Natural Resources
Godse Shri Hemant Tukaram

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) W hether the Government has set up/proposes to set up any constitutional mechanism for conservation of natural resources in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government for better and proper conservation of natural resources in the country?

Answer

(a): Government has not set up/ does not propose to set up any constitutional mechanism for conservation of natural resources in the country;

(b): Does not arise in view of the reply to (a) above;

(c): The National Mineral Policy (NMP), 2008 states that:

(i) Conservation of minerals shall be construed not in the restrictive sense of abstinence from consumption, or preservation for use in the distant future, but as a positive concept leading to augmentation of reserve base through improvement in mining methods, beneficiation and utilisation of low grade ore and rejects and recovery of associated minerals.

(ii) All mining shall be undertaken within the parameters of a comprehensive Sustainable Development Framework which, inter-alia includes guiding principles for a miner to leave the mining area in a better ecological condition after mining and for optimum utilization of the country's natural mineral resources.

Section 18 of the Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 empowers Central Government to frame rules for conservation and systematic development of minerals and for the protection of environment by preventing or controlling any pollution which may be caused by prospecting or mining operations. Accordingly, Mineral Conservation and Development Rules (MCDR), 1988 were framed wherein Rules 31 to 41 relate to regulation of environmental aspects of mining. As regulators, Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) and State Government approve the mining plan /scheme of mining for systematic and optimum utilization/extraction of mineral. As per the provisions of Mineral Conservation and Development Rules 1988, IBM carries out periodical inspections of mines to monitor conservation of minerals, systematic and scientific mining and protection of environment in the leasehold areas of minerals other than minor minerals, coal and atomic minerals.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has notified the Environment Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 on 14th September, 2006 under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to regulate the grant of environment clearance for various projects including mining projects. The impact on environment due to mining project is assessed by an EIA study. Based on the same, Environmental Management Plan is prepared which is considered and the Environment Clearance is granted stipulating conditions to regulate impact on environment due to the project.

The Central Government while according approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 stipulates appropriate mitigative measures, such as, creation and maintenance of compensatory afforestation, realization of Net Present Value of the diverted forest land, implementation of wildlife conservation plan (wherever required), phased reclamation of mined out area, demarcation of boundary of mining lease etc. Safeguards are in place to ensure that approvals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land for mining are accorded only after ascertaining that the area of forest land to be diverted is bare minimum and its diversion for non-forest purpose/mining is unavoidable.

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